

LOGIC LISTS ENGLISH
VOLUME FIVE -
IDIOMS
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INTRODUCTION

This volume covers idiomatic English, that is words that do not follow the normal pattern for understanding the language. For instance if you come across a word or phrase that doesn't appear to make sense, it could be that you need to look it up in an idiomatic dictionary or one that covers English proverbs.

Idiomatic language is in fact, a code within a code. It is therefore the most difficult form of language to learn because it is isn't literal and logical, based upon what you already know about the rules of the English language. You need to know the specific meaning, hidden in the words as normal usage does not apply. It is like going back to the beginning and learning a new language altogether, rather than just continuing with a normal form of upgrading.

Key words or modifiers, tell you the meaning of phrases and in the case of idioms this means historical, local or work orientated specialization. Word order and additional words, can also change the meaning of sentences significantly, for instance living to eat (loving the taste of food / gorging yourself, greedily) versus eating to live (devouring what you need to keep going / being on the breadline). It is these subtle differences and specialist usage or word combinations that can confuse learners because they are unexpected and illogical, when compared to simple, standard English, based on previous learning.

Apart from an idiomatic dictionary and a proverbs dictionary, learners are also advised to get a thesaurus, to follow related word chains that the mind automatically follows or instead of this a synonym dictionary, that is composed of words that all mean the same thing. A good simplified English dictionary is also helpful, like Websters or Collins as complex volumes may confuse you with technical terms and an overabundance of knowledge, unnecessary for anyone but a university student learning the language or one teaching it.

I had hoped to turn this whole series into computer programmes but alas I never had the money or got the backing financially to do this, so instead you will have to put up with a book format.

By the way, I have covered the first two pages with 'hands' idioms as it is by far the largest group in this subject area and the rest do not warrant this treatment, being far smaller groupings.

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Have a rare old time
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Have time on your hands
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Have a heart of stone
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A man after my own heart
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Shut your eyes to something
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He couldn't look me in the eye
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An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

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Lose your way
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Go your own way
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Pave the way for
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Be in a bad way
In the family way
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It's a licence to print money
It's money down the drain
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It's early days yet
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Put on a brave face
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Her face is her fortune
Stare death in the face
Go on, say it to my face
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Fly in the face of reason
Watch someone's face fall
Wipe that smile off your face
Look someone straight in the face
Throw something in someone's face
Laugh on the other side of your face

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A rough house
House of God
Be housebound
Be houseproud
Have a full house
Go house hunting
A housing boom
A clearing house
Keep open house
A house of cards
Be as safe as houses
It's as big as a house
A house of ill-repute
Be a household name
Be under house arrest
Bring the house down
It's a madhouse in there
A house warming party
Put your house in order
Have the run of the house
Get on like a house on fire
Have a drink on the house
The best houses in the land
Eat someone out of house and home

Be nosy
Nose about
Hard nosed
A nose job
A nosey parker
Take a nose dive
Lead by the nose
Follow your nose
Get a bloody nose
Thumb your nose at
Keep your nose clean
Turn up your nose at
Pay through the nose
It's right under your nose
You get right up my nose¹
Keep your nose out of it!
Have a nose for trouble
Have your nose in the air
Look down your nose at
Rub someone's nose in it
Put someone's nose out of joint
Keep your nose to the grindstone
Not see beyond the end of your nose
Cut off your nose to spite your face
It's as plain as the nose on your face
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To the life
The high life
A cushy life
A fact of life
Come to life
Prime of life
As large as life
Larger than life
Not on your life!
You bet your life
Clinging to life
Lead a double life
Lead a charmed life
Get a new lease of life
Put your life on hold
I'd stake my life on it
Get your life back on track
Have your life torn apart
Turn your life upside down
Within an inch of your life
Hanging on for dear life
I can't do it to save my life
Be the life and soul of the party
There's life in the old dog yet!
Pick up your life where you left off
For the life of me, I can't understand it

Back up
Back the field
Back-up service
Lack backbone
Get off my back!
Break the back of
Backbreaking work
Backs to the wall
Have a broad back
Turn your back on
The back of beyond
Give full backing to
Put your back into it!
Stab someone in the back
Get someone's back up
Go behind someone's back
Pat someone on the back
Come from a good background
Make a rod for your own backbone
Get your own back on someone
Be glad to see the back of someone
She's got a face like the back end of a bus
You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours
Look what happens when my back is turned
I break my back for you and this is how you reward me

The old world
The new world
Phoney world
Twilight world
Be world's apart
Out of this world
It's a small world!
The world at large
The world to come
Set the world on fire
Be dead to the world
Not for all the world
Be a man of the world
It's a funny old world
In the business world
The best of both worlds
In a world of your own
Feel on top of the world
Make your way in the world
It's not the end of the world
With the best will in the world
It would do you the world of good
My whole world fell apart when she left me
You've made me the happiest man in the world

Lap dog
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Dog fight
Dog Latin
Dog eared
Lucky dog
Dirty dog
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Be a dog's body
Work like a dog
It's a dog's life
The dogs of war
Go to the dogs
Die like a dog
It's a dog's dinner
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Be as sick as a dog
Be in the dog house
Let sleeping dogs lie
Give a dog a bad name
Wear a hang dog expression
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Be a copy cat
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Take a cat nap
Be a cat burglar
The cat's pyjamas
The cat's whiskers
Play cat and mouse
Cat got your tongue?
Curiosity killed the cat
Raining cats and dogs
Fight like cats and dogs
Let the cat out of the bag
Like a cat on hot bricks
Like a cat on a hot tin roof
A cat may look at a king
Have the morals of an alley cat
Set the cat among the pigeons
There's not a cat in hell's chance
There's no room to swing a cat in here
There's more than one way to skin a cat
You look like the cat that got the cream

Dead heat
Dead wood
Dead beat
Dead simple
Deadly poison
Dead set on
It's dead good
Dead as a dodo
Dead of night
Dead set against
Dead on your feet
Dead man walking
Dead in the centre
Dead and buried
Cut someone dead
Drop dead gorgeous
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Dead letter office
You're a dead man!
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I'm at a loss what to do about it

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Shed blood
Spit blood
Draw blood
Sweat blood
Young blood
Blood bath
Blood money
Blood sucker
Hot blooded
Blood brothers
Be cold blooded
It's in his blood
Blood will tell
Bad blood between
Blood transfusion
It makes my blood boil
Blood is thicker than water
Squeeze the lifeblood out of
Be out for someone's blood
It makes your blood run cold
It's like getting blood from a stone
I will fight you to the last drop of my blood

Name names
My good name
Maiden name
Clear your name
Name and shame
Naming no names
Be a name dropper
A household name
In the name of God!
Pass by the name of
Lend your name to
Trade on your name
Call someone names
No names, no packdrill
Give someone a bad name
Who shall remain namless
Make a name for yourself
That's the name of the game
His name is mud round here
Have a double-barrelled name
I've got nothing to my name
In God's name, what is going on here?
Drag someone's name through the mud

Get cold feet
Find your feet
Have feet of clay
Fall on your feet
Land on your feet
Put your feet up
Vote with your feet
Think on your feet
Sit at someone's feet
The patter of tiny feet
Dragging your feet
Rushed off your feet
Swept off your feet
Get back on your feet
Get under someone's feet
Stand on your own two feet
I've been on my feet all day
Put your feet under the table
Throw yourself at someone's feet
Pull the rug from under someone's feet
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Black mass
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Black magic
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What the hell is going on here?

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Play up to
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Play the fool
A play on words
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Play havoc with
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A home truth
A stately home
Home comforts
Home sweet home
Home from home
Be home and dry
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All the comforts of home
Come from a broken home
Tell him I'm not at home
Home is where the heart is
Bring something home to someone
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Be on the game
Play the game
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So that's your game
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Give the game away
I know what your game is
Two can play at that game
It's a whole new ball game
That's the name of the game
Don't play that game with me
Beat someone at their own game

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Be run down
Be on the run
In the running
In the long run
Run out of steam
Run for president
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Run someone down
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Have the run of the house
Run rings around someone
Don't run away with the idea
Give someone a run for their money

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Key speaker
Key player
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Latch key kids
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Be under lock and key
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Throw away the keys
Play something in the wrong key
Give someone the keys to the kingdom

He's a one!
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Go one better
It's a one-off
In one fell swoop
A one-man band
A one-armed bandit
A one-sided argument
Have a one track mind
Have one too many
One, two, three – go!
Go back to square one
He's had one too many
He's one in a million
Be one over the eight
All for one and one for all
We're all in one mind over this
From day one I never trusted him
I'd be the last one to cast aspersions but

Cheat death
Bleed to death
The death knell
Deathly quiet
Deathly hush
I'm sick to death
The kiss of death
Be tickled to death
Have a death wish
Be at death's door
Work yourself to death
Hang on like grim death
Frighten someone to death
Be on the verge of death
Have a brush with death
A near death experience
Catch your death of cold
You look like death warmed up

Be light fingered
Burn your fingers
A two fingered salute
Pull your finger out
Slip through your fingers
I can't put my finger on it
Keep your fingers crossed
You've put your finger on it
Have your finger on the pulse
He won't lift a finger to help
Have money stick to your fingers
Have something at your fingertips
Work your fingers to the bone
Point the finger of suspicion at
Don't you dare lay a finger on him
Be caught with your fingers in the till
Twist someone round your little fingered
The times that's happened, I can count on the fingers of one hand

My foot!
Athlete's foot
Gain a foothold
Be light footed
Wrong foot someone
Put your foot down
Put your foot in it
Trample underfoot
Not put a foot wrong
Be on a firm footing
Be footloose and fancy free
Start off on the wrong foot
Shoot yourself in the foot
Have a foot in both camps
Put your best foot forward
It's put me on my back foot
Follow in the footsteps of
Have one foot in the grave

True blue
A blue joke
Blue stocking
Be sad and blue
The baby blues
Be blue blooded
The thin blue line
The boys in blue
Turn the air blue
Scream blue murder
It came out of the blue
A blue collar worker
The blue rinse brigade
Someone's blue eyed boy
Beat someone black and blue
It was like a bolt from the blue
It happens once in a blue moon
Argue with someone until you are blue in the face

Second rate
Second hand
Second guess
Second sight
Second class
Second nature
Second to none
Second childhood
Get a second wind
Every second counts
Play second fiddle to
In a matter of seconds
Come off second best
Seconds out, round two
Have second thoughts about
Don't give it a second thought
Have a second string to your bow

Sure fire
Fire away
Hang fire
Hire and fire
Friendly fire
Play with fire
Come under fire
Quick fire jokes
Where's the fire?
Fire off questions
Spread like wildfire
Add fuel to the fire
Fight fire with fire
Be in the firing line
Be fired from your job
Go through fire and water
Have several irons in the fire

Be all ears
Lend an ear
Play it by ear
Be out of earshot
An earsplitting row
A word in your ear
Box someone's ears
Wet behind the ears
My ears are burning
Be out on your ear
Prick up your ears
It grates on the ear
I can't believe my ears
Be up to your ears in debt
Have your ear to the ground
It goes in one ear and out the other
Have something coming out of your ears

Fighting fit
Fight shy of
Be a dirty fighter
Put up a good fight
Have a fighting chance
Be spoiling for a fight
A bare knuckle fighter
Hand to hand fighting
Fight tooth and nail
Fight a running battle
Have plenty of fight left
Fight to control yourself
I want a good, clean fight
Knock the fight out of someone
Fight it out among yourselves
There's plenty of fight left in the old dog yet
He couldn't fight his way out of a wet paper bag

See red
Red tape
Blood red
Ruby red
Red blooded
A red herring
Be in the red
A red letter day
Red light district
Catch red handed
Paint the town red
Reds under the bed
Be as red as a lobster
Be shown the red card
Like a red rag to a bull

White lie
White noise
White goods
White wine
White wash
White wedding
White elephant
White Christmas
White as a sheet
Black or white?
In black and white
White knuckle ride
White water rafting
White collar worker
Swear black is white
See everything in black and white

The rule of law
The unwritten law
The law is an ass
Go beyond the law
Lay down the law
Fall foul of the law
The law of the jungle
A loophole in the law
In the eyes of the law
The long arm of the law
Necessity knows no law
Have the law on someone
Be on the wrong side of the law
Stay on the right side of the law
Keep within the letter of the law
Take the law into your own hands
One law for the rich, another for the poor

Colour bar
Be off colour
Lend colour to
Have a colourful past
Add a splash of colour
Be a colourful character
Show your true colours
A highly coloured report
Add a bit of local colour
Succeed with flying colours
Nail your colours to the mast
See someone in their true colours
Let's see the colour of your money
Have your views coloured by experience
Look at the world through rose coloured glasses

Hot air
Airy-fairy
Air your views
Walking on air
Clear the air
On the air
Off the air
Out of thin air
A fresh air fiend
As free as the air
Disappear into thin air
Put on airs and graces
Give a public airing to
Be like a breath of fresh air
It's all in the air at the moment
You could have cut the air with a knife

Feel small
Feel out of it
Feel the pinch
Get the feel of
No hard feelings?
Get the feeling that
Feel out of sorts
Feel under the weather
Hide your feelings
I don't feel myself
Vent your feelings on
The feel good factor
Are you feeling okay?
Feelings are running high
Have mixed feelings about

Full marks!
Hit the mark
Make your mark
Mark my words!
The mark of Cain
Leave your mark
X marks the spot
Overshoot the mark
Marks out of ten?
That's wide of the mark
That's nearer the mark
On your marks, get set, go!
Mark it up to experience
Place a question mark over something
Leave a question mark hanging over something

Go places
Out of place
Put in place
Fall into place
Pride of place
Know your place
A place in the sun
Be all over the place
It's not my place but
Have friends in high places
Keep someone in their place
Put someone in their place
You've come to the right place
Be in the right place at the right time
There's a time and a place for everything

Act funny
Act your age
A stage act
A vanishing act
Put on an act
Act on a whim
An act of God
A juggling act
Action stations!
Get in on the act
Clean up your act
A tough act to follow
Get your act together
Read someone the riot act
Actions speak louder than words

Throw a light on
Shed some light on
Be light fingered
It'll come to light
Be a leading light
Be in the spotlight
Be in the limelight
Put under the spotlight
Give the green light to
In the cold light of day
Hide your light under a bushell
Show someone in their true light
The light at the end of the tunnel
The lights are on but nobody's at home

Turn tricks
A hat trick
A bag of tricks
Confidence trick
A trick of the light
Know a trick or two
It's a tricky manoeuvre
A dirty tricks campaign
That should do the trick
Use every trick in the book
Have a trick up your sleeve
Use all the tricks of the trade
It's a trick I learned in the navy
I see you're up to your old tricks

A nose job
An inside job
A hatchet job
A put up job
Just the job!
A dead end job
Land a plum job
Boot out of a job
Jobs for the boys
A jobbing carpenter
Give up as a bad job
Make the best of a bad job
It's a good job you were here
You've got a job on your hands

Loose tongued
Be tongue tied
Tongue in cheek
Bite your tongue
Hold your tongue!
A slip of the tongue
Be a tongue twister
Have a sharp tongue
Set tongues wagging
Be on the tip of your tongue
Have you lost your tongue?
Keep a civil tongue in your head
Get your tongue round something
Get the rough edge of someone's tongue

A dark horse
Horses for courses
Hold your horses!
Flog a dead horse
Back the wrong horse
Swap horses midstream
If wishes were horses
It's a horse of a different colour
Put the cart before the horse
I got it straight from the horse's mouth
Don't get on your high horse with me!
Wild horses wouldn't drag it out of me
Lock the stable door after the horse has bolted
You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink

Go to ground
Run to ground
Gain ground
Ground breaking
Stand your ground
Be on shaky ground
Fall on stony ground
Prepare the ground
Be thin on the ground
Run into the ground
Cover a lot of ground
Hit the ground running
Get a project off the ground
That suits me down to the ground

Cold war
Trade war
Price war
Tug of war
Bidding war
Germ warfare
Wage a war on
A war of words
War of the sexes
A war of nerves
Be on the warpath
He's been in the wars
All's fair in love and war

Dress up
Dress circle
Fancy dress
Dress a chicken
Dressfor dinner
Dress the soil
Dressed to kill
Power dressing
Window dressing
A dressing down day
Be in a state of undress
Give someone a dressing down
Undress someone with your eyes

Rat bag
Old bag
Bum bag
Bag lady
Body bag
Mixed bag
Baggage car
It's in the bag
Pack your bags
Bag and baggage
Be a bag of bones
Be a bag of nerves
Come with baggage

Be skin tight
Thin skinned
Thick skinned
Skin your knee
Be all skin and bone
I'll skin you alive!
You old skin flint!
Save your own skin
Beauty is only skin deep
It fits like a second skin
Don't let it get under your skin
Escape by the skin of your teeth
You made me jump out of my skin!

Ghost story
Fairy story
A tall story
Kill a story
End of story
Sit on a story
A likely story
Break the story
Front page story
A hard luck story
A cock and bull story
A human interest story
To cut a long story short

Foul mouthed
Mealy mouthed
Loose mouthed
Word of mouth
Foam at the mouth
Down in the mouth
Shoot your mouth off
You and your big mouth!
It makes your mouth water
Put words in someone's mouth
Leave a nasty taste in your mouth
You would have to open your big mouth
Out of the mouth's of babes and sucklings

Queer fish
Be a cold fish
It smells fishy to me
Fish for compliments
It's neither fish nor fowl
It's a pretty kettle of fish
I've got other fish to fry
Go on a fishing expedition
He's like a fish out of water
He's a big fish in a small pond
She's like a fish in a goldfish bowl
There's plenty more fish in the sea
I need it like a fish needs a bicycle

Live a lie
Live it up
Live in sin
Live rough
Live and learn
Live and let live
I'll never live it down
Live life in the fast lane
How the other half lives
Live on your reputation
Live up to your reputation
Live beyond your means
Learn to live with something

Pass water
Water down
Hold water
Tread water
Test the waters
Be in hot water
A water tight alibi
Dull as ditchwater
Pour cold water on
Chart unknown waters
Turn on the waterworks
Pour oil on troubled waters

Show your teeth
Grit your teeth
Gnash your teeth
Grind your teeth
Set your teeth on edge
Lie through your teeth
It's like pulling teeth
Be in the teeth of a storm
Get your teeth into something
Get the bit between your teeth
Be fed up to the back teeth with something
I'd give my eye teeth for an opportunity like that

Girl power
Power mad
Flower power
Power hungry
A power house
Power dressing
Take a power nap
Thirst for power
Draconian powers
The powers that be
It'll do you the power of good
The power behind the throne

Social circles
Political circles
The inner circle
A vicious circle
Come full circle
In smart circles
Square the circle
The dress circle
Circle of friends
Run round in circles
Go round in circles
Circle the airfield

See double
Double time
Double date
On the double!
He's your double
Double back on
Double or quits
Double or nothing
A double whammy
Make mine a double
Speak double Dutch
Have a double-barrelled name

Not half!
Meet halfway
A halfway house
Go halves with
My better half
A half baked idea
I've half a mind to
A half-hearted effort
That's half the problem
Fly the flag at half mast
Don't do something by halves
Have half a chance to do something

Rule of law
Work to rule
Rule of thumb
Rules are rules
Bend the rules
Flout the rules
The golden rule
Play by the rules
Rule out foul play
I wouldn't rule it out
Rule with a rod of iron
It defies every rule in the book

Put the boot in
Be a bossy boots
Be given the boot
Shake in your boots
Hang up your boots
Lick someone's boots
Boot someone upstairs
Die with your boots on
Be as tough as old boots
Be too big for your boots
The boot is on the other foot now
Pull yourself up by your bootstraps

Be in pocket
Pocket an insult
Be out of pocket
Pocket something
Line your pockets
Hit someone's pocket
Be in someone's pocket
Pick someone's pocket
Out of pocket expenses
Dig deep in your pocket
Burn a hole in your pocket
Make a hole in your pocket

Be ages
Take ages
Act your age
Feel your age
Come of age
The New Age
Show your age
The age of consent
Be at an awkward age
Live to a ripe old age
Look good for your age

Greedy pig!
Piggy back
Pig out on
Eat like a pig
Be pig headed
Buy a pig in a poke
Make a pig of yourself
Happy as a pig in muck
A male chauvenist pig
Happy as pigs in clover
Play piggy in the middle

Jail bird
A rare bird
Free as a bird
Bird of ill omen
Bird's eye view
The bird has flown
A little bird told me
Kill two birds with one stone
Birds of a feather flock together
The early bird catches the worm
He could charm the birds off the trees

Brain wash
Brain drain
Brains trust
Bird brained
A no-brainer
Rack your brains
Have a brainwave
Be scatterbrained
Hare brained scheme
Pick someone's brains
Not have the brains you were born with

Bone dry
Bone idle
Lazy bones
Dry as a bone
Cut to the bone
The bare bones
Hit your funny bone
Be a bone of contention
Make no bones about it
I can feel it in my bones
Have a bone to pick with someone

Book an act
In my book
Cook the books
Go by the book
Be an open book
Throw the book at
Bring someone to book
I can read you like a book
Close the book on something
Be in someone's black books
That's a turn up for the books!

Make a bomb
It cost a bomb
Be a sex bomb
Blanket bombing
Drop a bombshell
It went down a bomb
Be a walking time bomb
It's a ticking time bomb
You're sitting on a time bomb
This place looks like a bomb site
It looks like a bomb has hit this place

Rag week
Student rag
Be a toe rag
The local rag
Lose your rag
A rag tag army
Be a ragamuffin
Wear your glad rags
Go from rags to riches
I feel like a washed out rag
It was like a red rag to a bull

Penny pinching
Spend a penny
Be two a penny
Penny for the guy?
They're two a penny
It cost a pretty penny
Make an honest penny
Penny for your thoughts?
Now the penny has dropped
Be penny wise, pound foolish
Trust him to turn up like a bad penny
I don't have two pennies to rub together

Play the market
Be downmarket
A captive market
Flood the market
Corner the market
An upmarket area
Come on the market
Be in the market for
Black market goods
The Common Market
Price yourself out of the market

First fruit
First and last
At first sight
Get first refusal
Love at first sight
Get a first at university
First come, first served
In the first flush of youth
I'll let you know first thing
There's always a first time for everything
Not know the first thing about something

Stone cold
Be stone deaf
Be stony broke
Be a stepping stone
Cast the first stone
Lay the cornerstone
Leave no stone unturned
Give someone a stony look
Be stoned out of your mind
It's a stone's throw away from here

Be a doormat
It's on my doorstep
Open the door to
Behind closed doors
Show someone the door
Never darken my door again
Slam the door in someone's face
Lay something at someone's door
Let something in through the back door
Leave the door open for further discussion

Pay the Earth for
Be down to Earth
Come down to Earth
What on Earth is that?
A scorched earth policy
Move Heaven and Earth
Why on Earth did you do it?
How on Earth did that get there?
Do something for no Earthly reason
You don't stand an Earthly chance

Fly off the handle
Like a swarm of flies
Be a fly in the ointment
A fly by night character
He wouldn't harm a fly
There are no flies on me
They dropped dead like flies
A fly on the wall documentary
Fly by the seat of your pants
Time flies when you are enjoying yourself

My hands are clean
He got clean away
They cleaned me out
It was a clean break
Make a clean sweep
We cleaned up on it
We wanted a clean break
Show a clean pair of heels
It tastes like cleaning fluid
They took me to the cleaners
It went clean out of my mind

Shoulder the blame
Rub shoulders with
Have broad shoulders
Be a shoulder to cry on
Cold shoulder someone
Have a chip on your shoulder
Put your shoulder to the wheel
Stand shoulder to shoulder with
Carry a burden on your shoulders
Shoulder the burden of responsibility

Thumb a lift
Thumb through
As a rule of thumb
Thumb nail sketch
Twiddle your thumbs
Give the thumbs up
Give the thumbs down to
Be all fingers and thumbs
Stick out like a sore thumb
Be under someone's thumb

Be touchy
Lose touch
Keep in touch
Lose your touch
Be touchy feely
Be out of touch
Be a soft touch
It was touch and go
Have the magic touch
Have the common touch

Hit a nerve
Nerve yourself
Be nerve racking
Lose your nerve
Touch a raw nerve
Be a bag of nerves
You've got a nerve!
Have nerves of steel
Get on someone's nerves
Be a strain on your nerves

Are you blind?
Have blind faith
Be blind drunk
Turn a blind eye to
Have a blind spot
Be blinded by hate
Go on a blind date
Be blindingly obvious
Go down a blind alley
It's a case of the blind leading the blind

In a nutshell...
Are you nuts?
He's a nutcase
I'm nuts about her
Pay someone peanuts
Be brown as walnut
Are you off your nut?
Be a hard nut to crack
He was like a pickled walnut
You drive me nuts sometimes

Be old hat
Achieve a hat trick
Pass round the hat
Be as mad as a hatter
At the drop of a hat
Keep it under your hat
Talk through your hat
I'll eat my hat if I am wrong
Take your hat off to someone
Throw your hat into the ring

To cap it all
Go cap in hand
Take a night cap
Mad cap antics
Set your cap at
Wear a dunce's cap
If the cap fits, wear it
Put on your thinking cap
That's a feather in your cap

Street cred
Streetwise
Civvy street
Mean streets
On Grub Street
Be Streets ahead
Take to the streets
The man in the street
The word on the street
That's right up my street

A track record
Keep track of
Be back on track
Cover your tracks
Be on the fast track
Make tracks for home
Be on the right track
Lose all track of time
Stop someone in their tracks
Come from the wrong side of the tracks

In round numbers
Safety in numbers
My opposite number
A number cruncher
My number was up
Time out of number
My days are numbered
Take care of number one
A back number of a magazine

Count me in
Count the cost
Count out a boxer
Count out money
Count your blessings
Countdown to launch
You can count on me
Count from one to ten
Stand up and be counted

Drag into line
Draw the line at
Take a hard line
Keep in line with
The bottom line is
My job's on the line
Drop someone a line
Somewhere along the line
There's a fine line between

The family silver
The silver screen
The silver jubilee
Thirty pieces of silver
You silver tongued devil
Cross my palm with silver
Every cloud has a silver lining
He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth

Get wind of
Be long winded
Get a second wind
A whirlwind romance
Sail close to the wind
Put the wind up someone
Throw caution to the wind
Take the wind out of someone's sail
I know which way the wind is blowing!

Shadow boxing
Shadow someone
Cast a long shadow
The shadow cabinet
Five o'clock shadow
Emerge from the shadows
Beyond a shadow of a doubt
Be afraid of your own shadow
Be a shadow of your former self

Clock on
Clock off
Clock someone
Be a clock watcher
Run like clockwork
Turn back the clock
Put the clocks back
Work round the clock
A round the clock presence

Split hairs
A bad hair day
A hair raising story
Keep your hair on!
Let your hair down
Tear your heart out
Without turning a hair
Escape by a hair's breath
Have your hair stand on end

Bite your lip
Lick your lips
Read my lips
Be tight lipped
Smack your lips
None of your lip!
Pay lip service to
My lips are sealed
Have a stiff upper lip

Rubber neck
Be neck and neck
Get it in the neck
Stick your neck out
Save someone's neck
At breakneck speed
Be up to your neck in it
Breathe down someone's neck
Carry a millstone round your neck

Arm candy
Armed guard
Armed to the teeth
Chance your arm
Keep at arm's length
Twist someone's arm
Be someone's right arm
Welcome with open arms
I'd give my right arm for
Have one arm tied behind your back

Leg-it
Shake a leg
The final leg
Be bow legged
Stretch your legs
Be on its last legs
Pull someone's leg
Give someone a leg up
He hasn't got a leg to stand on

Flesh out
In the flesh
Flesh and blood
The way of all flesh
The sins of the flesh
My own flesh and blood
Have your pound of flesh
It makes your flesh crawl
The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak

Child-like
Brain child
Child's play
A love child
A wild child
Second childhood
A child of the sixties
Behave like a spoiled child
Spare the rod and spoil the child

Tuck shop
Talk shop
Shut up shop
Bucket shop
Shop around
Shop someone
The shop floor
Be all over the shop
Mind the shop while someone is out

Kick off
Kick back
Kick a habit
Kick up a fuss
Kick up a stink
I could kick myself
Kick over the traces
Do something for kicks
Get a kick out of doing something

Bad language
Body language
Strong language
A dead language
A second language
Watch your language!
The language of violence
We talk the same language
It's like they are talking another language

Pep talk
Small talk
Loose talk
Pillow talk
You're talking tripe
Now you're talking!
Be the talk of the town
You're talking a load of rubbish
That's a load of old codswallop

Be shot of
Call the shots
Have a shot at
Take a long shot
Take a pot shot at
Be a shot in the dark
Be a shot in the arm
He was off like a shot
A shot-gun wedding

Be a bad egg
Egg someone on
Have egg on your face
Tread upon eggshells
As sure as eggs is eggs
It's like walking on eggshells
Don't put all your eggs in one basket
It's like the curate's egg – good in parts
You can't make an egg without breaking eggs

It's a piece of cake
Sell like hot cakes
Fall flat as a pancake
Be caked in make up
Be as nutty as a fruit cake
It's the icing on the cake
I want my slice of the cake
Have a chest as flat as a pancake
You can't have your cake and eat it

La-La land
Land ahoy!
Be landlocked
Never-Never land
In the land of Nod
The landed gentry
Win by a landslide
Reach a historic landmark
The land of milk and honey

Take a seat
Lose your seat
Take a back seat
Please be seated
Be in the hot seat
A seat of learning
The seat of the trouble
Keep someone's seat warm

Go to pot
Take pot luck
A pot bioler
A melting pot
A tin pot army
Have pots of money
The kettle calling the pot black
The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow

Rush hour
Happy hour
Hour of need
A good hour
A solid hour
At all hours
In the small hours
At an unearthly hour

Knock up
Knock back
Knock off
Knock about
Knock on wood
A knock down price
Knock yourself out
You could have knocked me sideways
You could have knocked me over with a feather

A dead duck
Be a lame duck
Be a sitting duck
Be out for a duck
Be an ugly duckling
Duck out of something
Like a duck out of water
It was like water off a duck's back

Chicken out
Chicken feed
Chicken hearted
Tender as a chicken
Be no Spring chicken
Run around like a headless chicken
Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
Don't count your chickens until they are hatched

Come to heel
Be well heeled
Be down at heel
Cool your heels
Turn on your heels
Dig your heels in
Have an achilles heel
Show a clean pair of heels

Work to rule
Work wonders
Work nine to five
Make light work of
Make short work of
Be a nasty piece of work
Have your work cut out
Do someone else's dirty work

I mean business
It's a bad business
Unfinished business
Mind your own business
I'm making it my business
You have no business here
I'm not in the business of
Send someone about their business

Deep seated
Deep rooted
Be deeply upset
Be deeply in love
Have deep set eyes
Be deeply ingrained
Be deeply disappointed
Throw someone in at the deep end

Jump ship
Jump start
Jump the gun
Jump at the chance
Jump to conclusions
Due for the high jump
Jump before you are pushed
Be one jump ahead of the opposition

Lollipop lady
Lady bountiful
Lady in waiting
Be a ladies man
Ladies who lunch
The lady of the house
Act in a ladylike manner
The old lady of Threadneedle street

Jack tar
Hit the jackpot
Jack in the box
Jack up the price
I'm alright Jack
Every man jack of them
Jack of all trades, master of none
Before you could say Jack Robinson, he'd gone

Strike out at
Go on strike
Strike a chord
A wild cat strike
A lightning strike
Strike a happy medium
Strike a blow for freedom
Strike while the iron is hot

Play God
God help us
God almighty!
Be a Godsend
An act of God
God's gift to women
There but for the grace of God, go I
In God's name, what is going on here!

Once and for all
Once upon a time
Once in a blue moon
Once this is all over
Give it the once over
Once we're back on our feet
I've told you that once already

For two pins
Two up, two down
I don't give two hoots
It takes two to tango
Put two and two together
It's a two edged compliment
Two's company, three's a crowd

Walls have ears
Within these four walls
The writing is on the wall
The weakest go to the wall
Drive someone up the wall
A hole-in-the-wall cash machine
Come up against a wall of silence

Brick it
She's a brick
Drop a brick
A redbrick university
It's like talking to a brick wall
Come down on someone like a ton of bricks
It's like knocking your head against a brick wall

High table
Table talk
Table a motion
Keep a good table
Turn the tables on
Drink someone under the table
Put on the table for consideration

It's pointless
Make a point
There's no point
Get to the point
I don't see the point
I don't see your point
Point soimething out

Magic carpet
Carpet bagger
Carpet bombing
Carpet someone
Sweep under the carpet
Roll out the red carpet
Haul someone over the carpet

Write a report
Writer's block
A ghost writer
Write someone off
Write something off
Be a budding writer
The writing is on the wall

Make history
Go down in history
That's ancient history
Consign something to history
Be airbrushed out of history
It's like holding a piece of history
That's a case of history repeating itself

Paint the town red
Paint a bleak image
Paint a gloomy picture
You're no oil painting
It's like watching paint dry
Paint yourself into a corner
He's not as black as he is painted

Kill off
Kill time
Kill zone
Make a killing
Be a lady killer
Be in at the kill
Kill two birds with one stone

Lift your spirit
Be spirited away
Be a kindred spirit
Raise your spirits
Dampen your spirits
I'm with you in spirit
Take something in the right spirit

Root out
Take root
Put down roots
Uproot someone
Root and branch
A deep rooted habit
Be rooted to the spot

Goose step
Goose flesh
Goose pimples
Cook someone's goose
Be on wild goose chase
He wouldn't say boo to a goose
Kill the goose that lays the golden egg

Bottom out
Reach rock bottom
Be bottom of the class
Get to the bottom of
Scrape the bottom of the barrel
Be as smooth as a babies bottom
I mean it from the bottom of my heart

Monkey nuts
Monkey business
You cheeky monkey!
Stop monkeying about!
Make a monkey out of
Softly, softly catchee monkey
Don't monkey around with me!

Cry wolf
Be a lone wolf
Wolf-whistle
Wolf down food
A wolf in sheep's clothing
Keep the wolf from the door
Throw someone to the wolves

See sense
It makes sense
Come to your senses
Have a sense of loss
Have a sense of proportion
Bring someone to their senses
Have you taken leave of your senses!

Love birds
It's a labour of love
In loving memory
Love someone to bits
Not for love, nor money
Have a love-hate relationship with
There's no love lost between them

Dream team
Have a bad dream
The American Dream
Live in a dream world
It went like a dream
I wouldn't dream of it
Riches beyond your wildest dreams

Babysit
Be a cry baby
Be baby faced
Sleep like a baby
Be left holding the baby
Be soft as a baby's bottom
Throw out the baby with the bath water

Oh brother!
Big brother
Blood brothers
The Brotherhood
Brother-in-law
Brothers in arms
Am I my brother's keeper?

A press campaign
The gutter press
Be pressed for time
Have a pressing need
Not get a good press
Have a pressing engagement
Have a pressing appointment

Net profit
Net income
Surf the net
Tighten the net
Wear a hair net
Get caught in the net
Slip through the net

Riding high
Have an easy ride
Ride roughshod over
Be riding for a fall
Get taken for a ride
A white knuckle ride
There's no such thing as a free ride

Go Dutch
A Dutch barn
Dutch courage
A Dutch auction
Talk double Dutch
Be a Dutch uncle
If that's true, I'm a Dutchman!

Be a card
Be a card sharp
Your trump card
It's on the cards
Hold all the cards
Have a card up your sleeve
Put your cards on the table
Have the cards stacked against you

Hammer out the details
Come under the hammer
Hammer something home
It came as a hammer blow
Go for someone, hammer and tongs
Use a sledgehammer to crack a walnut
My heart was thumping like a sledgehammer

Tighten the screw
Screw up your face
Have a screw loose
Screw up something
Screw up your courage
Put the screws on someone
Have your head screwed on the right way

Be the bread winner
Be on the bread line
It's my bread and butter
It's the best thing since sliced bread
Take the bread out of someone's mouth
Have your bread buttered on both sides
Know which side your bread is buttered on

Binge drink
The demon drink
I need a stiff drink
A non-alcoholic drink
Drive someone to drink
Drink to the memory of
Have a drink on the house

Good show!
A side-show
A show down
Run the show
Steal the show
The show must go on
Let's get the show on the road

Build bridges
Bridge a gap
Burn your bridges
Be a bridging loan
Pull up the drawbridge
That's all water under the bridge
I'll cross that bridge when I come to it

Sixth form college
Have a sixth sense
Be at sixes and sevens
Knock someone for six
Give someone six of the best
It's six of one, half a dozen of the other

That rings a bell
Sound warning bells
It's as sound as a bell
Set alarm bells ringing
I heard it clear as a bell

Cut corners
Turn the corner
Fight your corner
Corner someone
Be in a tight corner
The four corners of the Earth

Window dressing
Window shopping
Fly out the window
A window on the world
The windows of the soul
Be a window of opportunity

Brush off
Brush to one side
Be daft as a brush
Have a brush with death
Be tarred with the same brush
Brush up your language skills

Pop the question
No questions asked
The big question is
It's out of the question
Call something into question
Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies

Blanket fog
Blanket ban
Blanket bombing
Blanket coverage
Be a wet blanket
Be born on the wrong side of the blanket

Take the chair
Address the chair
Appeal to the chair
Play musical chairs
Be an armchair critic
Be an armchair traveller

A bed of nails
A hotbed of sin
Make good bedfellows
Have a good bedside manner
Get out of bed on the wrong side
You've made your bed, now lie on it

Picture perfect
Get the picture?
See the whole picture
Be pretty as a picture
Be the picture of health
Put someone in the picture

Hit the bottle
A bottle blond
Be a bottle neck
Bottle out of something
Bottle up your feelings
You've got a lot of bottle

Long time no see!
It's been a long day
It's as long as it is broad
It's a long time to hang about
That's the long and the short of it
I long for the day when that happens

Nod to
Nod off
Give the nod to
Be in the land of nod
Be a nodding acquaintance
A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse

Weather the storm
Be a fair weather friend
Feel under the weather
Be a fair weather friend
Keep a weather eye open
Freak weather conditions
Be a fair weather friend
Make heavy weather of something

It had its moments
An unguarded moment
It's the moment of truth
In the heat of the moment
On the spur of the moment
He's the man of the moment

Rat race
Rat pack
Love rat
Smell a rat
Rat on somebody
Look like a drowned rat

Be cock-eyed
Talk poppy cock
Cock a snook at
Be cock-a-hoop
A cock and bull story
Be cock of the walk

Bug a room
Be a fire bug
Be a litter bug
Stop bugging me!
Be snug as a bug in a rug
Be bitten by the travel bug

Lack body
Be a nobody
Be a body blow
Sell your body
Keep body and soul together
An out of the body experience

Cut throat competition
At each other's throats
Have a lump in your throat
Jump down somebody's throat
Slit your own throat over a deal
Ram something down somebody's throat

Cheek by jowl
Bare faced cheek
You've got a cheek
None of your cheek!
Dance cheek to cheek
Have the cheek of the devil

Be weak kneed
On your knees!
Beg on bended knees
A knee-jerk reaction
Go weak at the knees
Bring someone to their knees

Save your breath
Catch your breath
With bated breath
Don't hold your breath
Don't waste your breath
It took my breath away

Be quick witted
Live on your wits
A battle of wits
I'm at my wits end
Keep your wits about you
Frighten someone out of their wits

Happy now?
Happy birthday!
Happy Christmas!
Strike a happy medium
Happy hunting ground
When's the happy event?

Be a laughing stock
Laugh out of court
Have the last laugh
It was a laugh a minute
It's no laughing matter
Laugh? I could have cried

Be an eye-sore
Be sore about
Hit a sore point
That's a sore point
Be a sight for sore eyes
Stick out like a sore thumb

Pay for damages
You'll pay for that!
Pay over the odds
Pay with your life
Pay up your account
Pay your way in the world

Hard cash
Cash in on
Splash the cash
Asset rich, cash poor
Be strapped for cash
Cash-in-hand work

Set the stage
Stage manage
Upstage someone
Stage a recovery
Stage a comeback
Suffer from stage fright

Be a pin up
For two pins...
Be as neat as a new pin
Suffer pins and needles
Pin back your lugholes
Pin your hopes on something

Press the button
Be on the button
Be cute as a button
Button-hole someone
Be as bright as a button
Have something buttoned up

Take on board
Go overboard
Be above board
Sweep the board
A boarding party
Go by the board
Win across the board

Run a tight ship
The ship of the desert
Go down with your ship
Like rats leaving a sinking ship
Like ships that pass in the night
Be all shipshape and Bristol fashion

On the record
Off the record
In record time
Beat the record
Set the record straight
Since recorded history

Be in the trade
Ply your trade
Insider trading
Trade on sympathy
The tricks of the trade
Do a roaring trade in something

Get a tip off
Tip top service
Walk on tip toes
Be tipped for the top
It's just the tip of the iceberg
It's on the tip of my tongue

Throw a wobbly
Throw a tantrum
Throw in the towel
A throwaway society
It's a stone's throw away
Be thrown on the scrapheap

Broken English
Pidgin English
Estuary English
Recieved English
The Queen's English
Speak in plain English

Be a king pin
It's fit for a king
Be king of the castle
Blow to kingdom come
It's worth a king's ransom
Hold the keys to the kingdom

Be at peace
Keep the peace
Hold your peace
Peace be unto you
Have peace of mind
Make a peace offering

Jump the gun
Be a gun runner
Stick to your guns
Go down all guns firing
Put a gun to someone's head
Be out, gunning for someone

Shoot off
Shoot from the hip
Be a trouble shooter
Be on a fashion shoot
Shoot someone a line
Shoot an idea down in flames
Trust you to shoot off your big mouth!

Pay on the nail
Be as hard as nails
Be as dead as a doornail
Hit the nail on the head
Drive a nail into someone's coffin
I can't nail it down but something isn't right

Pack it in!
Pack a wound
A pack of wolves
A pack of biscuits
Pack the kids off to school
Pack your bags, you're leaving

Have butter fingers
Butter up someone
A butter mountain
Fine words butter no parsnips
Have butterflies in your stomach
He looks like butter wouldn't melt in his mouth

Comfort eating
Eat your words
What's eating you?
Be eaten up with jealousy
I'll eat you alive for that!
Some project that is eating up your time

Be an old salt
Salt something away
Be worth your salt
Rub salt in a wound
Be the salt of the Earth
Take something with a pinch of salt

The Big Apple
Be in apple pie order
Upset the apple cart
Be the apple of my eye
Be the rotten apple in the barrel
As sure as God made little apples

Pull your weight
Be a dead weight
Throw your weight around
Be worth its weight in gold
Take the weight off your feet
Throw your weight behind someone or something

Be a goody two shoes
Work on a shoe string
Step into a dead man's shoes
Step into someone else's shoes
The shoe is on the other foot now isn't it?
I wouldn't want to be in your shoes, when the boss finds out!

Tune into
Call the tune
Be in tune with
To the tune of
Tune something out
You've changed your tune

Sing along with
Sing for your supper
Sing someone's praises
Have a sing-song voice
Sing out if you see anyone
It isn't over till the fat lady sings

A four letter word
The Fourth Estate
The fourth dimension
Make up a foursome
Stand four square behind

Eton Mess
Officer's mess
Stop messing about!
Don't mess with me
You always mess things up, don't you?

Floor show
Wipe the floor with
Get in on the ground floor
Cross the floor of the house

Skip classes
Be a class act
Be top of the class
Be bottom of the class
Be in a class of your own

An IQ test
Litmus test
The acid test
Stand the test of time
Put something to the test

Bully boy
Boy, oh boy!
Be a new boy
Be a whipping boy
The old boy network

Ten out of ten!
The ten times table
I'll bet you ten to one
He talked ten to the dozen
There must be tens of thousands of them!

Hit the roof
Raise the roof
Go through the roof
Shout it from the rooftops
Not have a roof over your heads

A square deal
Square accounts
Square the circle
Win fair and square
It's all square at this point

Win by a mile
He ran a mile
It sticks out a mile
It's a milestone victory
You could spot it a mile off

Green issues
Have green fingers
Be green with envy
Give the green light to
The grass is always greener on the other side of the hill

Grey men
A grey beard
Grey matter
A grey area
The men in grey suits

Rock solid
Be on the rocks
Hit rock bottom
Be steady as a rock
Stuck between a rock and a hard place

Stay cool
Lose your cool
Keep your cool
Cool your heels
Be cool, calm and collected

Be on cloud nine
Live in cloud cuckoo land
Have your head in the clouds
Be under a cloud of suspicion
Cast a shadow over proceedings

Take by storm
Ride the storm out
A storm in a teacup
A storm of controversy
The calm before the storm

A gap year
The lost years
Man of the year
Year in, year out
From the year dot

Guardian angel
Angel of mercy
Be a fallen angel
Have the face of an angel
Be on the side of the angels

A straw poll
Draw straws
A man of straw
Clutch at straws
That's the last straw!
Draw the short straw

Touch wood
Give a wooden performance
Crawl out of the woodwork
We aren't out of the woods yet
Not see the wood for the trees

Shake like a leaf
Read the tea leaves
Turn over a new leaf
Leaf through a book
Take leaf out of someone's book

Fly the nest
A love nest
Have a nest egg
Foul your own nest
Be a cuckoo in the nest

Wing commander
Spread your wings
Clip someone's wings
Fly on a wing and a prayer
Take someone under your wing

A worm's eye view
Open up a can of worms
Even the worm will turn
Worm your way round someone
Worm information out of someone

Low brow
High brow
Knit your brows
Raise your eyebrows
Gain something by the sweat of your brow

Toe the line
Get a toe hold
Walk on tiptoes
Tread on someone's toes
Keep someone on their toes

Have a strong stomach
Have no stomach for
Take on an empty stomach
Just the thought of it turns my stomach
Have a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach

Fancy that!
Take a fancy to
A flight of fancy
Tickle your fancy
You fancy yourself, don't you?

Be bored stiff
Be bored silly
Be bored stupid
Be bored to tears
Be bored out of your mind

Dumb down
Dumb blond
Dumb waiter
Dumb animals
I'm dumb struck

Take pains
Growing pains
No pain, no gain
You're a pain in the neck!
Wear a pained expression

Lick your wounds
Re-open old wounds
Time heals all wounds
Suffer from wounded pride
Fester like an open wound

It runs in the family
Be in the family way
Be a close knit family
Be the head of the family
Take on a ready made family

A family man
Be your own man
He's a marked man
Be a self made man
Be someone's fancy man

Mother tongue
A mother's boy
Be a fairy godmother
Be a wicked stepmother
The mother of invention

Be a father figure
Like father, like son
Be the father of modern science
The father of modern medicine
On the father's side of the family
The sins of the father are visited on the sons

Miss the boat
Rock the boat
Push the boat out
When my boat comes in
We're all in the same boat

Count your blessings
It's a mixed blessing
You have my blessing
It's a blessing in disguise
Give your blessings to something

Take holy orders
Be a holy terror
Be holier than thou
The holy of holies
Holy mother of God!

Judge for yourself
Make a snap judgement
I'll be the judge of that
Against my better judgement
Have something cloud your judgement

Go begging
To go begging
It beggar's belief
You silly beggar!
It begs the question

Match that!
Match point
A slanging match
A matching pair
Game, set and match

Be on the ball
A ball park figure
Keep the ball rolling
Keep your eye on the ball
The ball's in your court now

Step by step
Be out of step
Watch your step!
Take a step up the ladder
Drastic steps will be taken

A pitched battle
It's half the battle
Fight a losing battle
Battle of the bulge
It's become a battleground

Tighten your grip
Have a vice like grip
Don't lose your grip
In the grip of Winter
Get a grip on yourself

Stick the knife in
Go under the knife
Be on a knife edge
Knife someone in the back
Go through something like a hot knife through butter

Be a death trap
The poverty trap
Shut your trap!
It's booby trapped
Keep your trap shut

Rake up the past
Rake off the profits
Rake in the money
Rake over the coals
Be skinny as a rake

Milk teeth
Milk a situation
The land of milk and honey
The milk of human kindness
It's no use crying over spilled milk

Spill the beans
Be full of beans
I don't have a bean
It's not worth a bean
How many beans make five?

Skirt the coastline
Be a piece of skirt
Skirt around something
Hide behind a woman's skirts
Live on the outskirts of town

Fit like a glove
Be hand in glove
Take the gloves off
Treat with kid gloves
An iron hand in a velvet glove

Sleep on it
Sleep it off
Go on a sleepover
The sleep of the just
I wouldn't lose any sleep over it

Make a scene
Set the scene
Steal the scene
Come on the scene
Behind the scenes

Play a role in
Land a plum role
Be a role model
Take over the role
Cast someone in the role of the villain

Bank a plane
Break the bank
Bankroll someone
You can bank on it
Did you rob a bank to get that lot?

Foot the bill
The old bill
A bill of sale
Pick up the bill
Be given a clean bill of health

Pay the price
Slash the price
Price out of the market
It was a heavy price to pay
That's the price, take it or leave it

Don't think twice
Cousin twice removed
That's twice in a row it's happened
It happened twice in as many months

Come in third
Third time lucky
University of The Third Age
Give someone the third degree

A lengthy argument ensued
Keep someone at arms length
The lengths some people will go to
Go to any lengths to achieve something

A nine day wonder
Dressed up to the nines
A stitch in time saves nine
Possession is nine tenths of the law

I've told you a hundred times...
There's a hundred and one reasons why
You're not a hundred miles away from the truth
If I have said it once, I have said it a hundred times

Can it!
A can do attitude
Open up a can of worms
Carry the can for someone

Plate up
Silver plate
Handed it to someone on a plate
I've got enough on my plate as it is

A forklift truck
A fork in the road
Speak with a forked tongue
Fork out the money for something

Be old school
A school of thought
Tell tales out of school
The school of hard knocks

Have a peg leg
You can't peg it on me
Take someone down a peg
Be a square peg in a round hole

He's a little dotty
Sign on the dotted line
I'll be there at six on the dot
It's just a dot in the distance now

A pen name
Be a pen pusher
A poison pen letter
The pen is mightier than the sword

Paper money
Be paper thin
Paper over the cracks
It's not worth the paper it is written on

Brown nose
Be browned off
Get Brownie points
Be brown as a berry

Go up in smoke
Create a smokescreen
It's all smoke and mirrors
Disappear in a puff of smoke

Make waves
A crime wave
Be on the crest of a wave
Be on the same wavelength

Pump iron
Iron out differences
Have a cast iron defence
Have a cast iron constitution

Blow sky high
Sky high prices
Be pie in the sky
The sky is the limit
An eye in the sky

Break the ice
Skate on thin ice
Put something on ice
It's just the tip of the iceberg

Rain cats and dogs
Come rain or shine
Feel as right as rain
Keep something for a rainy day

See stars
Be starry eyed
Be a rising star
Have stars in your eyes

Manna from heaven
Be heaven on Earth
Stink to high heaven
Have a heavenly body

Hit the hay
Go haywire
Make hay while the sun shines
It's like looking for a needle in a haystack

A family tree
Be up a gum tree
Not see the woods for the trees
You're barking up the wrong tree

Log on
Log off
Sleep like a log
It's as easy as falling off a log

Be stick thin
It sticks out a mile
Be a stick in the mud
Get hold of the wrong end of the stick

Chase your own tail
Put a tail on someone
Be nose to tail in a traffic jam
It's a case of the tail wagging the dog

Count sheep
Look sheepish
Separate the sheep from the goats
It's like being savaged by a dead sheep

Do the donkey work
Wear a donkey jacket
I haven't seen him for donkey's years
He can talk the hind legs off a donkey

It gets my goat!
Be a scapegoat
Play the giddy goat
Wear a goatee beard

Feather your own nest
Smooth ruffled feathers
That's a feather in your cap
You could have knocked me down with a feather!

Be the bees knees
Be busy as a bee
Make a bee-line for
Like bees to honey

Cut a poor figure
Be a figure of fun
Speak figuratively
Be a fine figure of a man

Be jawing away
A jaw dropping experience
You should have seen his jaw drop
He was snatched out of the jaws of death

Chin up!
Have a chin wag
Stick your chin out
Take it on the chin

Elbow room
Be elbowed aside
Use elbow grease
Give someone the elbow

Knuckle down
Knuckle under
Rap on the knuckles
Be close to the knuckle

Have an itchy palm
Grease someone's palm
Palm something off on someone
Have someone in the palm of your hand

You gutless wonder
Hate someone's guts
You don't have the guts
I'll have your guts for garters!

Skeleton staff
Skeleton crew
A skeleton key
Have a skeleton in the cupboard

Road rage
Vent your rage
Seethe with rage
It's all the rage!

Be scared stiff
Be scared witless
Be scared silly
Scare the pants off someone

Court disaster
Court of appeal
A kangaroo court
Laugh out of court

Live like a lord
Lord it over others
Be lord of all you survey
Be as drunk as a lord

A pea souper
Be like two peas in a pod
It's as easy as shelling peas

Unveil plans
Draw a veil over
A veil of secrecy
A thinly veiled attack

Laugh up your sleeve
Have nothing up your sleeve
Wear your heart on your sleeve
Roll up your sleeves and get stuck in

All roads lead to Rome
Fiddle while Rome burns
Rome wasn't built in a day
When in Rome do as the Romans do

Make inroads
Be at a crossroads
It's the end of the road
Have one for the road

Be over the hill
It's gone downhill, fast
That's as old as the hills
Find life an uphill struggle

A fairy tale
A tell tale sign
An old wives tale
Tell tales on someone

Close ranks
Break ranks
The rank and file
Pull rank on someone

A den of thieves
Be as thick as thieves
Like a thief in the night
There's no honour among thieves

Sell up and move on
Don't sell yourself short
Sell an idea to someone
She's past her sell by date

Sport a beard
Be a good sport
How are you doing old sport?
Give someone a sporting chance

Reach your goal
Be an own goal
My goal in life
Shift the goalposts

Pack a punch
Pull your punches
Be punch drunk
Punch someone's lights out

Sink or swim
Be in the swim of things
Swim against the tide
Things are going swimmingly

By hook or by crook
Let someone off the hook
Get hooked on something
Swallow something hook, line and sinker

A depth charge
An in depth study
I'm out of my depth here
Be in the depths of despair

Take a leap of faith
What leaps to mind is...
Take a leap in the dark
Succeed in leaps in and bounds

It's a win-win situation
It's a no-win situation
It's a catch 22 situation
It's a sticky situation to get into

Trump that!
Turn up trumps
Play your trump card
Be on a trumped up charge

The die is cast
Never say die
Old habits die hard
Be as straight as a die

Down tools
Be a valuable tool
A marketing tool
It's a poor workman who blames his tools

Spit poison
Name your poison
Write a poison pen letter
Poison someone against you

Be threadbare
Hang by a thread
Lose the thread of an argument
Pick up the thread, where you left off

Be fit as a fiddle
Be on the fiddle
Fiddle while Rome burns
Play second fiddle to someone

Look the part
Play a key part
Be part of the furniture
Throw yourself into a part

Go to town on
Town and gown
Be a man about town
Be the talk of the town

A treasure trove
She's a treasure
Be a treasure chest
I'll treasure it always

Wrap up!
That's a wrap!
That wraps it up for the day
Wrap someone in cotton wool

Live off the fat of the land
A fat lot of good that will do you
The fat will be in the fire now!

A honey trap
The honeymoon period
Be as sweet as honey
The honeymoon is over

Be in a jam
Be jam packed
You want jam on it
Get someone out of a jam

Tommy-rot!
Tom foolery
Be a peeping Tom
It could be any Tom, Dick or Harry

Junk food
Brain food
Food for thought
A fast food outlet

The big cheese
Hard cheese old man
Be cheesed off
They are like chalk and cheese

Keep someone sweet
Be all sweetness and light
I'll do it in my own sweet time
Whisper sweet nothings in someone's ear

Be a meal ticket
Meals on wheels
Eat a square meal
Make a meal of something

A lunch basket
Ladies who lunch
Let's do lunch sometime
There's no such thing as a free lunch

Pie in the sky
Eat humble pie
It went sweet as pie
Have a finger in every pie

Go bananas
Have banana fingers
Be a banana republic
Slip on a banana skin

A tasteless joke
Be in bad taste
Be in good taste
Show lack of taste

Make mincemeat of
It's meat and drink to me
It's got plenty of meat in it
One man's meat is another man's poison

Family quarters
Show no quarter
Be hung, drawn and quartered

Thanks a million!
Not in a million years
A chance in a million

High five
Give me five!
A bunch of fives

Be the wrong side of fifty
In fifty years, no-one will care
I'll split it with you, fifty-fifty
There's a fifty-fifty chance you're right

You blockhead!
Be a building block
Be a stumbling block

Be a pillar of strength
Be a pillar of society
Be driven from pillar to post

Mend fences
Sit on the fence
Be a fence for stolen goods

Gate crash a party
The pearly gates
Between me, you and the gate post

Take a step up the ladder
Have a ladder in your stocking
Be on the first rung of the ladder

Shelve a plan
Be on the shelf
Have a certain shelf life

Junk food
Junk mail
Be a pile of junk
Be on the junk heap

Pan for gold
Be a flash in the pan
Jump out of the frying pan into the fire

She's a dish
Someone's signature dish
You can dish it out but you can't take it, can you?

Be spoon fed
A greasy spoon restaurant
Be born with a silver spoon in your mouth

Read the tea leaves
It's not my cup of tea
Not for all the tea in China

Fly off the handle
Be someone's handler
Be good at handling people

Be an object lesson
Teach someone a lesson
Let that be a lesson to you

Read out loud
Read all about it
Read something into
Read between the lines

Don't answer back!
How come you know all the answers?
I want a straight answer to a straight question

Inch forward
Every inch of the way
Give him an inch and he'll take a mile

I'm whacked
I want my fair whack
A whacking great something

Be glued to the TV
Be glued to the phone
Stick like glue to a task

Have a high profile
Keep a low profile
Raise your profile

Lack atmosphere
Create an atmosphere
Be devoid of atmosphere

Stem the flood
A flood of tears
Open the floodgates

Stem the tide
Turn the tide
A growing tide of hatred

Snowball out of control
Be snowed under with work
Be pure as the driven snow

Be in season
Be out of season
The silly season

A one night stand
Fly by night character
Burn the midnight oil

The graveyard shift
Dig your own grave
Be quiet as the grave

A ghost town
Be a ghost writer
The ghost of a smile

Tempt fate
Seal your fate
Suffer a fate worse than death

Go to seed
Be an unseeded player
Sow the seeds of doubt

Be a prophet of doom
Be a harbinger of doom
Doom and gloom merchants

A party animal
Behave like an animal
Be worse than an animal

Grass roots
Put out to grass
Let the grass grow under your feet

Puppy love
Puppy fat
Be a young pup

Be barking mad
Be barking up the wrong tree
His bark is worse than his bite

Road hog!
Hog attention
Go the whole hog

Score a bulls eye
Take the bull by the horns
Act like a bull in a china shop

Silly cow!
A sacred cow
Do something till the cows come home

Be blind as a bat
Have bats in the belfry
Shoot out like a bat out of hell

The lion's share
Beard the lion in his den
Put your head in the lion's mouth

A nanny goat
The nanny state
A children's nanny

Have crow's feet
As the crow flies
What are you crowing about?

A snake oil salesman
Play snakes and ladders
Be a snake in the grass

A flea market
Be flea bitten
Send someone away with a flea in their ear

Get stung
Have a sting in the tail
Take the sting out of something

Have a sweet tooth
Be long in the tooth
Go over something with a fine tooth comb

A treasure chest
Get something off your chest
Play your cards close to your chest

Be bosom buddies
Be bosom friends
Be in the bosom of your family

Live in the lap of luxury
It's in the lap of the gods
Have something drop into your lap

A think tank
Think the unthinkable
If you believe that, you have another think coming

Give moral support
Win a moral victory
Have moral certainty

Listen to reason
It stands to reason
It's without rhyme or reason

Conscience money
In all conscience...
It's a matter of conscience

Be in character
Be out of character
Be quite a character

I'm wise to him
I'm none the wiser
Be wise after the event

Swallow your pride
It's my pride and joy
Be a blow to your pride

A saving grace
Fall from grace
Have the good grace

A pet hate
Receive hate mail
I hate to tell you but

Put to shame
Shame on you!
It's a crying shame

Be ill at ease
Harbour ill will
Bear someone no ill will

Have a nagging doubt
Be without a shadow of doubt
Give someone the benefit of the doubt

Buck the trend
Pass the buck
The buck stops here

No dice
Dice with death
Have the dice loaded against you

Crown someone
To crown it all
The crowning glory

Be in stitches
Stitch someone up
Be without a stitch

Get knotted!
Tie the knot
Get tied up in knots

Wear and tear
Be the worse for wear
Have an effect wear off

Patch together clues
Patch up a quarrel
It's not a patch on...

Be woolly minded
Wrap someone up in cotton wool
Pull the wool over someone's eyes

Pull a pint
Be pint sized
I could murder a pint

Face the music
Play musical chairs
That's music to my ears!

Whistle in the dark
Blow the whistle on
You can whistle for it

Whip into shape
Be a whipping boy
Hold the whip hand

Going for a song
They're playing our song
Make a song and dance about something

Change your image
Be the spitting image of someone
I can't erase the image from my mind

Coin money in
To coin a phrase
They're two sides of the same coin

I feel like a million dollars
You can bet your bottom dollar on it
That's the million dollar question

The pearly gates
Pearls of wisdom
Have pearly white teeth

Tower over somebody
Be a tower of strength
Live in an ivory tower

Hope against hope
Pin your hopes on something
Don't build your hopes up

Fall on deaf ears
Be as deaf as a post
The silence was deafening

Be hopping mad
Drive someone mad
There's method in my madness

Sail against the wind
Sail through an exam
It's plain sailing all the way

Be all at sea
Find your sea legs
Suffer a sea change

Horse trials
A trial of strength
Learn through trial and error

Be a spin doctor
Doctor the accounts
Just what the doctor ordered

Soldier on
Be a soldier of fortune
Don't come the old soldier with me

Be on a treadmill
That's grist to my mill
Be put through the mill

Be an ugly customer
Be a tough customer
Be a slippery customer

Rein in
Take up the reins
Keep your spending on a tight rein

Bite the bullet
A bullet train
A bullet with your name on it

A chain letter
Ball and chain
Be a member of a chain gang

Plug the gap
Pull the plug on something
Plug someone full of lead

Wear long johns
A dear john letter
A johnny come lately

Cream off the profits
The cream of society
The cream of the crop

Pull up your socks
Put a sock in it
Sock someone on the jaw

COCKNEY RHYMING SLANG

Whistle and flute	Suit
Borassic lint *	Skint
Apples and pears	Stairs
Trouble and strife	Wife
Sweeney Todd *	Flying Squad
Todd Sloan	Alone
(on your Todd)	-
Pen and ink	Stink
Barnet Fair *	Hair
China plate *	Old mate
Frog and toad	Road
Rosie Lee	Tea
Cock Sparrow	Barrow
Adam and Eve	Believe
Kermit the frog	Bog
Daisy roots	Boots
Talk and mutter	Butter
Jam jar	Car
Bottle and glass	Class
Ruby Murray	Curry
Brown bread	Dead
Mince pies	Eyes
Boat race	Face
Brass tacks	Facts
Plates of meat *	Feet
Bread and butter	Gutter
Crust of bread *	Head
Loaf of bread *	Head
Jack and Jill	Hill
Pins and pegs *	Legs
Pork pies	Lies
(porkies)	-
Butcher's hook *	Look
North and south	Mouth
Dog and bone	Phone
Half inch	Pinch
Dicky Dirt	Shirt
Chevy Chase	Face
Two and eight	State
Tea leaf	Thief
Dicky Bird	Word
Hampstead Heath *	Teeth
Cream crackered	Knackered

* The first word in the list can also be used as an abbreviation, to carry across the same meaning, causing further confusion to the learner e.g plates instead of plates of meat

FOREIGN AND ANCIENT TERMS IN ENGLISH

De jure
De trop
De facto
De rigueur

Pro tem
Pro rata
Pro forma
Pro bono

Ad hoc
Ad libris
Ad nauseum
Ad infinitum

Ex libre
Ex gratia
Ex machina
Ex officio

Per se
Per capita
Per annum

En masse
En route
En passant

Prima donna
Prima facie
Prima ballerina

Terra firma
Terra incognita

In vitro
In extremis

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